detention in custody for some 19 days. The case was decided against the plaintiff, who had to pay costs of the suit.

Criminal Cases.

113. Criminal proceedings were instituted against one of the Depôt officers serving in the Dángs, Gulábchand Prágji, for having levied excess fees upon produce removed, and thereafter under fear of detection for having burnt some portion of his records. The Political Agent, Khándesh, before whom he was arraigned, sentenced him to one year's rigorous imprisonment.

(*c*). Improvement of Forest Growth.

(*1*). *Natural Reproduction.*

114. In the Thána forests natural reproduction was vigorous during the year and would be perfect if fires and cattle trespass could be wholly checked. The coppice in most of the exploited coupes grows fast, though the teak excels other species in this respect during the first years of its re-growth. The shoots also suffer to a certain extent, when they first commence to appear, from the browsing of wild animals such as Portax pictus, Tetroceros gudricornis and Cervalus arcus; the neighbourhood of a recently felled coupe being almost a certain find for one or other of these animals. In a good many of the compartments exploited in the earlier years of the Working Plan rotation, *i.e.* in 1887-88, a dense crop of promising mixed forests is now to be seen, and the progress made by each year of successful closure in dominating the grass, reeds and other noxious growth has secured the compartments from all possible danger from fires. So long as there is a sufficient area open to grazing for the wants of the people, it is not advisable to shorten the limit of closure of ten years fixed in the Working Plan, for the longer the young stock is left undisturbed the better it will grow.

115. The fires of the year having not proved disastrous, except in the forests on the Tánsa Lake catchment area, and the rainfall having been ample though late, a plentiful crop of seedlings, it is very natural to expect, should have established themselves, as it is invariably found that they do so when the above circumstances are present.

116. The plague of caterpillars noted by Mr. Shuttleworth as having probably interfered with the flowering and seeding of the teak, by eating all their leaves and checking the growth of trees, was fortunately absent during the year.

117. It is worthy of notice that the Inga dulcis, which was experimentally cultivated on the Thána-Panvel road, has now become firmly established and reproduces itself naturally. Several self-sown seedlings are now found in the vicinity of the parent trees on the borders of the adjoining forests.

118. In the Surat Division natural reproduction is somewhat retarded by fires, and as a whole is not very satisfactory. Bulsár and Chikhli ranges are, however, exceptions to the general rule, and are a splendid example of what Nature can do in this respect. The remarks of Mr. Lely, the Collector, on this subject are worth quoting :—

"Some of the forests in the south of the district though small are pictures. In Mándvi Táluka the soil is inferior, but the Department is there reclothing large tracts of land and vindicating itself as one of the most useful agencies of the country."

119. Natural reproduction in the Panch Mahál Division is to be found in small patches few and far between, but wherever it presents itself it is good. Owing to the state of the forests being generally far from fully stocked, it only asserts itself very slowly; and, until the people learn to respect the closures better than they do at present, prospects of clothing denuded areas solely by natural means are very remote.

(*2*). *Artificial Reproduction.*

120. Cultural operations in this Circle are, as a rule, confined to the exploited compartments and other closures in order to assist natural reproduction. Regular plantations properly so called, being very small in extent, appear to have

an educational rather than a fiscal value, and have not been made hitherto with a view of covering large denuded areas.

121. In the East Thána Division, in addition to the work of filling up blanks in closures by broad-casting and dibbling seed or pit planting, the lands acquired on the catchment area of the Tánsa Lake were again operated upon. It has been already remarked in paragraph 92 that fires devastated that area ; but from recent reports it appears that a large percentage of plants have shot up again, showing that they were deep rooted. Forest guards sowed 3,640 maunds of different kinds of seeds and transplanted a large number of seedlings procured from the surrounding forest over 871 acres.

To fill up bare places in the coupes of the West Thána Division, pit planting was chiefly resorted to with fair success and a considerable quantity of seed was scattered about the forests to aid natural reproduction. A small plantation occupying 3 acres was started at Rábále in the Sálsette Range, and the usual method of sowing and transplanting was adopted. The success of the plantations was not, however, assured, as a large number of the young plants died off ; the exception being in the case of some teak and ain transplants, which remained healthy throughout the hot weather, though their growth was necessarily slow.

122. In the Surat Division the results of the year's operations are said to be successful, especially in the small coupes of the Bulsár and Chikhli ranges. In Mándvi, however, owing to the majority of the plants on the area (177 acres) taken in hand in the previous year having died off, the same was replanted with teak and other valuable species ; new plantations covering 18 acres were created in the Wareth Reserve.

123. Artificial as well as natural reproduction has no chance in the forests of the Dángs so long as fires sweep over them year after year from end to end.

124. In the Panch Maháls Division 247 maunds of miscellaneous seeds were collected and sown by forest guards over 410 acres with very indifferent results. Mr. Fisher reports that "operations of this and past years show very poor results,—in fact, none from an economic point of view." The cause of failure appears to be that sufficient supervision has not been exercised in the past over the subordinates in this matter. The Divisional Forest Officer's attention has been drawn to this fact, and it is hoped that cultural operations will be better looked after in the years to come.

125. The area and cost of the foregoing operations in the several divisions were as under :—

No.	Division.	Area	Cost.	Remarks.
		Acres.	Rs. a. p.	
1	East Thána	5,129	.....	
2	West Thána	24,512	474 0 0	
3	Surat	1,380	466 0 0	
4	Panch Mahals	742	.....	
	Total ...	31,763	940 0 0	

(3). Early Thinnings.

126. This operation is of a very delicate nature and, unless intelligently performed, it ceases to be advantageous in the interest of the young stock. Such work, therefore, cannot be entrusted to the subordinates, and has not been undertaken hitherto by Divisional Forest Officers personally, owing to the extent of their charges and the minute attention they are required to pay to details in the general working of the forests.

(4). Other operations for the improvement of the growing stock.

127. Forest guards in all the divisions of this Circle, with the exception